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Department of State

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ACTION AID-85

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 SR-01 ORM-01 IGA-02 SS-10 H-01 PM-04

PRS-01 10-13 /125 W

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P R 031140Z OCT 70  
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6576  
INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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STATINTL

AIDAC

SUBJECT: KENNEDY SUBCOMMITTEE STAFF REPORT ON REFUGEE  
AND CIVILIAN CASUALTY PROBLEMS IN INDOCHINA

REF : A. STATE 159167  
B. STATE 159183

1. REGRET SUBCOMMITTEE DISTRESS OVER WHAT IS OBVIOUSLY  
A MISUNDERSTANDING OF USG AND GVN ATTITUDE TOWARD REFUG-  
GEES AND "SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND DAILY LIVES OF SOUTH  
VIETNAMESE PEOPLE." IN FACT, BASIC SITUATION HERE HAS  
INDEED CHANGED VERY GREATLY ALTHOUGH MISSION IS FIRST TO  
RECOGNIZE THAT PROBLEMS OF REFUGEES, CIVILIAN WAR CASUAL-  
TIES AND OTHER SOCIAL STRAINS HAVE NOT YET BEEN ELIMINATED  
IN SOUTH VIETNAM. BUSINESS-AS-USUAL ATTITUDE HARDLY  
CHARACTERIZES THE SEVEN-DAY WORK WEEK OF OFFICIALS IN  
VIETNAM IN FIELD AS WELL AS SAIGON, AND BELIEVE THERE IS  
NO FALSE OPTIMISM AS TO WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND HAS YET TO BE  
DONE.

2. IT IS TRUE THAT NEW REFUGEES ARE STILL BEING GENERATED. HO-  
WEVER, THE AVERAGE MONTHLY RATE HAS DROPPED TO 3,000 FROM  
ABOUT 10,000 IN 1969. MOREOVER, CONTRARY TO ALLEGATIONS IN THE  
REPORT, GENERATION OF REFUGEES IS NOT PRIMARILY BY US  
BOMBING OR OTHER MILITARY ACTIONS, BUT RESULTS LARGELY FROM  
CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN ENEMY AND DEFENDING ARVN FORCES.



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AN EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS THE INVASION OF THE QUANG TRI LOWLANDS BY NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY UNITS WHO MADE MAJOR THREAT TO LIVES AND PROPERTIES OF VIETNAMESE RESIDENTS BEFORE BEING HELD BY LOCAL FORCES AND DRIVEN OUT BY ARVN, WITHOUT US COMBAT FORCE INVOLVEMENT. ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES WAS RAID BY NORTH VIETNAMESE AT VILLAGE OF THAN MY SOUTH OF DA NANG IN WHICH, AFTER BEING REPELLED BY LOCAL FORCES FROM ORIGINAL TARGET AT BRIDGE, THEY THREW GRENADES INTO HOUSES AND BUNKERS, KILLING 75 INNOCENT CIVILIANS, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

3. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THERE ARE STILL LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES TO BE CARED FOR (SEE PARA 6 BELOW), AND THERE ARE STILL REFUGEE CAMPS WITH SERIOUS PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY IN SUCH PROVINCES AS QUANG NAM, WHICH HAS SEEN MAJOR INVASIONS BY NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY UNITS COUNTERED BY THE MILITARY FORCE OF ARVN AND THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER IN NEIGHBORING PROVINCES WHERE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES HAVE BEEN DRIVEN WELL BACK INTO THE HILLS, THE REFUGEES HAVE IN GREAT PART RETURNED TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THUA THIEN PROVINCE OVER 120,000 PEOPLE HAVE LEFT THE REFUGEE CAMPS (MOSTLY ALONG THE SAFETY OF THE MAIN ROAD) TO RETURN TO THE "STREET WITHOUT JOY" AND OTHER AREAS WHERE THEY ARE REESTABLISHING THEIR HOMES AND REPLACING THEIR LAND. IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE, ALMOST HALF A MILLION PEOPLE RETURNED TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES IN 1969; THROUGH AUGUST OF 1970 ABOUT 195,000 REFUGEES (INCLUDING SOME WHO RETURNED IN 1969) HAD RECEIVED ALL THEIR RETURN-TO-VILLAGE ALLOWANCES, AND ANOTHER 250,000 WERE IN PROCESS OF RECEIVING THESE ALLOWANCES. RETURN-EEES HAVE ALSO BEEN BENEFITING FROM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

4. LIKE SOME OTHER COUNTRIES, VIETNAM HAS BY NO MEANS SOLVED THE PROBLEMS OF URBAN MIGRATION. THE TREND TOWARD THE CITY, A NOTABLE PART OF THE LANDSCAPE EVERYWHERE, IS HEIGHTENED BY THE WAR AND THE MANY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS THAT FOLLOW IN ITS WAKE. PARTLY TO DISCOURAGE EVEN GREATER POPULATION INFUX TO THE CITIES, THE GVN HAS NOT GENERALLY RECOGNIZED AS REFUGEES THOSE WHO HAVE MOVED TO URBAN AREAS (MANY ARE IN ANY CASE MORE PROPERLY DEFINED AS ECONOMIC MIGRANTS), BUT HAS TAKEN STEPS TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF ALL CITY-DWELLERS, NEW MIGRANTS, AS WELL AS RESIDENTS OF MANY YEARS' STANDING. ADMITTEDLY THESE STEPS (E. G., URBAN



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IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS AND CREATION OF URGAN CADRES TO ASSIST LOCAL COMMUNITY EFFORTS) HAVE AS YET BEEN INSUFFICIENT. BUT THIS IS DUE AS MUCH TO THE ENORMITY AND COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEMS AS TO SHORTCOMINGS OF THE VIETNAMESE PROGRAMS AND OF THE U.S. ADVISORY EFFORT.

5. ALL IN ALL, IT MUST BE SAID THAT THE GVN, UNDER WARTIME CONDITIONS OF SHORTAGES OF CIVILIAN MANPOWER AND RESOURCES, HAS EXTENDED ITSELF TO GIVE A HELPING HAND TO THE MANY PEOPLE HURT BY A CRUEL WAR THRUST UPON THEIR COUNTRY. WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, THE PASSAGE OF A VETERANS LAW TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR THIS IMPORTANT GROUP, AND EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LAND TO THE TILLER PROGRAM, HAVE GIVEN EVIDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO OFFER A HOPEFUL FUTURE TO ITS CITIZENS WHEN PEACE CAN BE ESTABLISHED IN THE LAND.

6. FOLLOWING ARE COMMENTS ON SUMMARY OF SUBJECT REPORT (REF B), AND SENATOR KENNEDY'S PREFACE (REF A):

A. REF B, PARA I (SOUTH VIETNAM), 1 CURRENT TOTAL OF REFUGEES IS AS FOLLOWS (AUGUST 20): IN-CAMP: 206,905; OUT-OF-CAMP: 92,379; TOTAL: 299,284. REFERENCE ARRIVES AT "WELL OVER 500,000 REFUGEES ON BOOKS" BY ERRONEOUSLY INCLUDING AS REFUGEES 249,000 PEOPLE IN RETURN-TO-VILLAGE PROCESS. -- I, E. PEOPLE WHO HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES, ARE IN PROCESS OF RECEIVING THE BENEFITS TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED, AND ARE PROFITING FROM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THEIR RETURN-TO VILLAGE SITES....  
BUNKER